

# Central Valley Flood Protection Plan and San Joaquin River Restoration Program

*State of California (State) law, enacted through the Central Valley Flood Protection Act of 2008 and codified in Sections 9600 through 9625 of the California Water Code, requires the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) to prepare the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan (CVFPP). The CVFPP proposes a State Systemwide Investment Approach for sustainable, integrated flood management in areas currently protected by facilities of the State Plan of Flood Control (SPFC).*

*Each fact sheet in the CVFPP Related Project Series provides a brief summary of the subject effort and its relationship to the CVFPP.*

The San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP) is a comprehensive long-term effort to restore flows to the San Joaquin River from Friant Dam to the confluence of the Merced River, restoring a self-sustaining Chinook salmon fishery in the river while reducing or avoiding adverse water supply impacts from restoration flows. This program is a direct result of a Stipulation of Settlement (Settlement) reached in September 2006 on an 18-year lawsuit related to operation of Friant Dam near Fresno, California, by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation). The Settling Parties include the U.S. Departments of the Interior and Commerce, the Natural Resources Defense Council, and the Friant Water Users Authority. The Settlement received federal court approval in October 2006. The San Joaquin River Restoration Settlement Act in Public Law 111-11 passed in March 2009, and authorized and directed the Secretary of the Interior to implement the Settlement.



Reclamation has released a draft Program Environmental Impact Statement/Report (PEIS/R) for the SJRRP in April 2011 for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The proposed action is to implement the Settlement consistent with Public Law 111-11. The draft PEIS/R includes both a “program-level” analysis and a “project-level” analysis. All actions evaluated at a program level would require additional project-specific evaluations and environmental reviews before implementation.

The Final PEIS/R is anticipated for release in Spring 2012. Reclamation is the Lead NEPA Agency, and DWR is the Lead CEQA Agency. More information is available at <http://www.restoresjr.net/>.

## State Participation

The State is not among the Settling Parties in the litigation; however, through the California Natural Resources Agency (DWR and Department of Fish and Game), and Environmental Protection Agency, the State entered into a September 2006 Memorandum of Understanding with the Settling Parties that outlines an important, collaborative role for the State in the planning, designing, funding, and implementing the actions called for by the Settlement. The State has been supporting the Settlement, providing resources for current site-specific projects, studies, and data collection. The State will also play a significant role in assessing flood risk for the SJRRP.

## Relationship to Central Valley Flood Protection Plan

The CVFPP focuses on the areas currently receiving protection from SPFC facilities. The Restoration Area considered in the SJRRP (defined as the river and associated areas and structures from Friant Dam to the Merced River confluence) is largely rural-agricultural with some small communities. A portion of the Restoration Area currently receives flood protection from SPFC facilities (see map on following page).

Under the CVFPP, the State is considering the following actions for rural-agricultural and small communities:

1. Structural and nonstructural options for protecting small communities in the SPFC Planning Area from a 100-year (1% annual chance) flood.
2. Rural-agricultural flood protection options, with a focus on integrated projects that achieve multiple benefits, including:

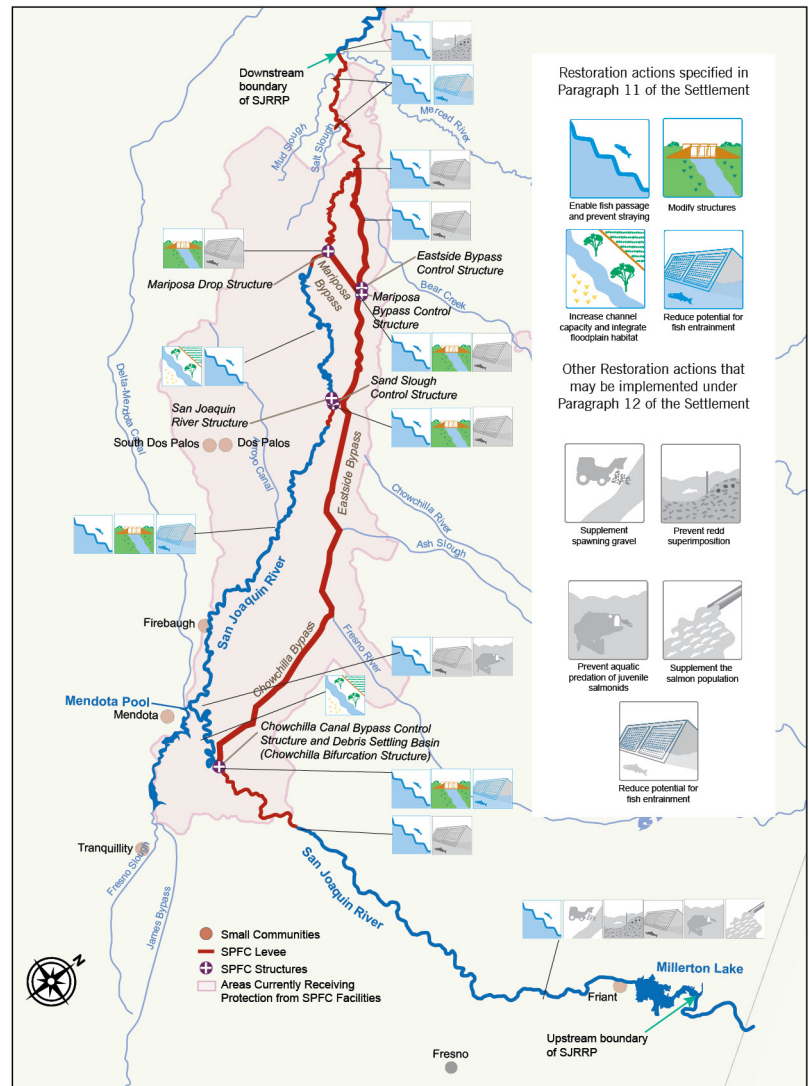
- » Maintaining SPFC levee crown elevations and providing all-weather access roads to facilitate inspection and floodfighting.
- » Conducting levee improvements, including setbacks, to address known performance problems; and subject to additional project-level evaluation, reconstructing rural SPFC levees to also address small community protection, where economically feasible.
- » Acquiring agricultural conservation easements to preserve agricultural practice and prevent further urban development, when consistent with local land use plans and in cooperation with willing land-owners.

To facilitate restoration, the Settlement calls for additional modifications to river channels and bypasses, and to water diversion and flood management facilities in the Restoration Area.

Many of the SJRRP modifications would require additional detailed studies and regulatory permits, and some of those actions are associated with SPFC facilities. Where feasible and consistent with the CVFPP's State Systemwide Investment Approach, SJRRP actions could be considered for CVFPP implementation.

It is critical that Settlement implementation minimize or avoid increasing flood risk in the Restoration Area (regardless if protected by SPFC facilities or not). Per the Settlement, the maximum downstream rate of Interim Flows (defined as initial flow releases to study specific actions) and Restoration Flows (long-term flow releases) would be limited to then-existing channel capacity throughout the Restoration Area. Therefore, the SJRRP includes three integrated measures to collectively minimize or avoid increasing flood risk in the Restoration Area:

1. Establishing a Channel Capacity Advisory Group and applying performance standards to determine and update estimated then-existing channel capacities. This group will



**SPFC Facilities in Restoration Area (based on an SJRRP features map from SJRRP Draft PEIS/R (2011))**

Notes: 1. SJRRP could also construct or modify pumping facilities downstream from the Restoration Area. 2. For more details on SPFC, see State Plan of Flood Control Descriptive Document (DWR, 2011).

consist of one representative from each of the following: Reclamation, DWR, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Lower San Joaquin Levee District, and the Central Valley Flood Protection Board.

2. Maintaining Interim and Restoration flows at or below estimated then-existing channel capacities.
3. Closely monitoring erosion and performing maintenance and/or reducing Interim and Restoration flows, as necessary, to avoid erosion-related impacts.